
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests and Range

RISK OF WILDFIRES REMAINS HIGH THIS WEEKEND

VICTORIA – Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman is encouraging British Columbians to play it safe with campfires this long weekend.

"Of all the holiday weekends, this one is perhaps the riskiest in terms of people letting down their guard when it comes to fires," said Coleman. "It might feel like summer is over, but please don't be lulled into a false sense of security. The risks are still extremely high, with 140 fire starts this past week alone."

Firefighting crews are responding to increased activity in the southern half of the province. British Columbia fire managers are also working with their counterparts in Washington and Idaho to respond proactively to the fire threats created by the three large fires burning in the U.S.

Weather conditions in most parts of the province are hot and dry, with recent rainfall insufficient to eliminate the risk of wildfires being ignited by campfires, cigarettes or other human activity.

"All human-caused fires are preventable, and they divert valuable resources from other activities, be it firefighting or carrying out fuel reduction work," said Coleman.

Backyard and industrial burns are currently prohibited in Kamloops, Cariboo, Coastal and Southeast fire centres. The Forest Service reminds the public that campfires should be doused with water until the ashes are cool to the touch, and that cigarettes should not be disposed of carelessly.

In response to a historical decrease in fire threat anticipated into mid-September, some B.C. crews are being demobilized, many of them university students returning to school. Existing crews will be involved in rehabilitation activities and projects such as fuel management when not responding to fires.

For the latest information on fire bans, restrictions, fire danger ratings and weather information visit the Protection program website: www.for.gov.bc.ca/protect/. Please report all grass and forest fires to 1-800-663-5555, or *5555 on the cellular network.

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